THE

RECONSTRUCTIONIST

DEDICATED TO THE ADVANCEMENT OF JUDAISM AS A RELIGIOUS CIVILIZATION, TO THE UPBUILDING OF ISRAEL'S ANCIENT HOMELAND, AND TO THE FURTHERANCE OF UNIVERSAL FREEDOM, JUSTICE AND PEACE.

Vol. 1. February 22, 1935—Adar I, 19, 5695 No. 4

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THE SOCIETY FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF JUDAISM

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THE RECONSTRUCTIONIST POSITION

WE approach our task from the point of view of Judaism as a religious civilization. We envisage Judaism as the proper concern of all Jews, religious and unreligious, conservative and radical . . .

IN affirming that Judaism is a civilization we give emphasis to the fact that it includes . . . communal organization, language, law, art, mores, customs, as well as religion. Moreover, all of these elements are organically related to each other; to omit any of them is to distort Judaism. All of them are functions of the group life of Israel and cannot be maintained unless we maintain the unity and integrity of the Jewish people and the continuity of its spiritual efforts.

WE believe that the material and spiritual welfare of the Jews can be achieved only through Jewish communal organization . . . We favor the establishment of Jewish communal life in America, democratically administered and organized in such a manner as to include all Jews who wish to identify themselves with the Jewish people, regardless of what their personal philosophy may be.

IN affrming that Judaism is a *religious* civilization, we recognize first, the historic fact that the God idea has dominated the entire pattern of Jewish life in the past, and that continuity with our past is impossible without giving to religion a position, if not of primacy, at least of *primus inter pares;* and secondly, the social fact that a mature and complete civilization is bound to find expression in the idea of God and in forms of religious worship in which the hopes and ideals of human life are rendered articulate. It is that very sense of need for religion that impels us to reinterpret the traditional beliefs in keeping with what for us must be a tenable world outlook, and to revise and develop the traditional usages in keeping with spiritual needs which we can genuinely experience.

WE consider the establishment of Palestine indispensable to the life of Judaism in the diaspora. We seek to enable Jewish civilization so to root itself in the soil of Palestine as to make of the land the cultural center for Israel's intellectual and spiritual rebirth. We oppose any attempt to render Palestine the object of imperialist aims or the victim of private profit-seeking. We endorse every effort toward the establishment of a cooperative commonwealth in Palestine based upon social justice and social cooperation . . .

WE are opposed to fascism in every form. We object to any philosophy of government which seeks to curtail the rights of individuals to the free pursuit of personal salvation through participation in any religious or cultural activity, or through affiliation with any national or ethnic group . . . Recognizing the horror and irrationality of war as a means of adjusting conflicting interests, we shall support every effort looking to the perfection of machinery for the peaceful adjudication of such conflicts and to the utilization of such machinery as exists, wherever possible. Under no circumstances shall we give countenance or support to an imperialistic war that is designed to advance the interests of exploiting and oppressing classes . . .

SOCIAL righteousness is possible only upon the establishment of a cooperative society, the elimination of the profit system, and the public ownership of all natural resources and basic industries. Until these objectives are achieved our sympathies and our support go to labor in its struggle with its employers for a more equitable distribution of the income of industry, and in the assertion of its right to organize for the protection of its interests without interference from its employers.

—*From "The Reconstructionist", January* 11, 1935.

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EDITORIALS

Rabbis May Plead Guilty

THE statement recently issued by the two hundred and forty-one Reformist rabbis endorsing the Palestine labor movement has evoked some hysterical opposition from Revisionist sympathizers. The *Jewish Daily Bulletin*, in particular, has been especially fierce in its denunciation of Rabbi Israel and his colleagues for advocating a movement which "instigates class warfare," which "teaches atheism," and which is "socialistic." It would not ordinarily be necessary to answer charges like these, superficial and ill-considered as they are, if the danger were not so great that irreparable damage to Palestine might ensue from the assumption, by American Jewry, that these charges were true. We deem it important, therefore, to demonstrate their falsity.

The charge of instigating class warfare is one that is always leveled against those who take up the cudgels for the oppressed and exploited against the oppressors and exploiters. Reactionaries resent the defense of the under-dog, and retort with their perennial battlecry of "peace." The fact is that resistance against injustice must necessarily imply opposition, clash of interests, and it is sheer sophistry to maintain that the militant defense of human rights is identical with adherence to the *principle* of class warfare. It is Communism which sets forth the principle in the concept of the "class struggle," as a corollary of the economic interpretation of history. The Histadruth is not Communist; their doctrine is not Marxism, but Socialism.

Now then, how can rabbis advocate Socialism? The answer is to be found in the description given by the *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics* (Vol. 11, p. 649): "Socialism appears . . . as a movement, vision, hope, theory and ideal, generated by modern conditions, motived in the deepest intent and meaning of it by ethical impulse and inspiration, and issuing in a characteristic demand for the economic reconstruction of society along well-defined lines, and in the anticipation of an earthly order of existence, based on new economic and industrial arrangements, inspired by new motives and purposes, and intended to provide a fuller and richer opportunity for the development of individual freedom, powers and qualities of personality, in a life of more intense, real and satisfying fellowship than, thus far, the world has seen." Is it any wonder that rabbis find it possible, nay imperative, to plead guilty to the charge of advocating Socialism?

But the cry is raised: aren't the Socialists atheists? We remind our readers that Socrates, whom posterity has reverenced as the founder of Greek

ethical philosophy, was martyred on the charge of teaching atheism to the youth; and that our own ancestors were pronounced atheists by the Romans who found no idol in the Holy of Holies. It is true that the Histadruth and Socialists generally are opposed to *organized religion* because it has so often suborned social injustice by preaching to those who gained wealth unjustly the virtue of charity, and the virtues of stoicism and submission to the victims of that injustice. To that extent, rabbis, if they are sincere, must agree with the critics of organized religion and must make it their sacred duty to remove that stigma from it by developing a sensitiveness in "religious" Jews to social evils, and a bad conscience in those who are compelled to submit to the evils of the present system.

But fundamentally Socialism strives to realize the highest ethical ideals, and in so doing reveals itself to be at one with religion at its best. By its "conviction of supreme ethical ideals resident in persons, and the certainty that the meaning of life is the realization of those ethical values through and by individual freedom, development and self-expression," Socialism deserves to be acknowledged as the finest concrete program ever formulated for modern times for the attainment of those prophetic goals which our religious tradition has set up for us.

There Ought to Be a Law

WE, the editors of THE RECONSTRUCTIONIST, are obviously more than a little interested in the Jewish problem. We welcome discussion of it and rejoice at any indication of a growing concern with it among intelligent Jews. Above all, we greet joyously the publication of books devoted to Jewish issues. What greater demonstration can there possibly be of a rebirth of Jewish culture in America than the appearance of a new Jewish literature?

In the light of these considerations, we should be very happy. Did not the Sunday Book Review section of the *New York Times* carry on February 3rd two long reviews of two books written by Jews and about Jews? And yet so perverse are we that we find ourselves unable to burst forth into paeans of joy. In fact we are much disturbed at the moment by several questions.

Should not the author of a book about Jews know something about his subject? Do we not prefer no books on our favorite theme to a multitude which reveal nothing except misconceptions, ill-digested facts and profound ignorance. We pose these questions to ourselves and find ourselves not too pleased with Robert Nathan's *Road of Ages* and George Sokolsky's *We Jews.*

It is, to be sure, easier to reconcile one's self to the former. *Road of Ages* is after all a novel. We make no pretenses to a complete knowledge of the niceties of literary conventions. We have heard tell that a novelist may use the facts as he sees fit. Mr. Nathan's work is, after all, a satiric phantasy and he may be justified in taking any liberties he chooses. We should have preferred that he really understood the Jewish problem better. One really cannot expect effective satire from an author who does not know the physical material with which he is dealing.

It is much harder to be patient with Mr. Sokolsky. In his *We Jews,* he set out to write a serious, though popular, study of the Jews and their problems. As qualifications for his task he brings the following: he was reared in an orthodox household in the ghetto of New York, he spent fourteen years away from Jews and Jewish life, he is an expert on Chinese affairs and he has a facile pen. To be sure, Mr. Sokolsky has made special efforts to equip himself for his task at hand. He has read fiercely and indiscriminately in current Jewish books. He quotes from *Graetz* Vol. I, and current periodicals. But he has obviously read only secondary sources, and these not too judiciously. As a result,

except when he comments on immediately current issues, where one man's observations are as good as another's, he possesses an authoritative knowledge of none of his materials. *We Jews* naturally is confused and confusing, poorly reasoned. It arrives sometimes at correct conclusions—but generally on the basis of the wrong arguments. When Mr. Sokolsky insists that the salvation of the Jew depends on a return to his God, to Zionism and a renewed loyalty to Jewish tradition, we are inclined to agree with him. We wish however that he had been a bit more explicit about his idea of God, that he had decided before he set out to write whether he accepted Palestine solely as a spiritual center, that he had a fuller knowledge of the tradition to which he would have Jews return.

The issue is, of course, larger than its Jewish aspect. It involves a point in general literary ethics. Has an author the moral right to write books on subjects about which he knows little or nothing? Does hurried reading over an indeterminate period make an authority? Or is the sole requirement for writing the desire to write?

That is a problem that lies beyond our scope. So far as Jewish books are concerned we are much annoyed. In fact, we are sorely tempted to say—"There ought to be a law . . . "

What's Become of the Jewish Planning Committee?

AT the recent conference of the National Council on Jewish Welfare, a vitally important suggestion was made, namely, that the Council call a conference of all Jewish organizations to appoint a Planning Committee. The purpose of this Committee would be to make a thorough study of Jewish life in America in its social, religious, cultural, economic and organizational aspects, and to present on the basis of its findings a program for the reconstruction of Jewish life. More than a month has elapsed since the conference; but we have heard nothing that would indicate that the Council has given the idea of a Planning Committee any further thought or consideration. In spite of the silence, it is difficult for us to believe that the leaders of the Council intend to ignore the suggestion completely and let it die of inanition. We prefer to believe that in the turmoil of post-conference days, the officers and leaders have been too preoccupied with administrative details to give the suggestion the careful study it deserves.

In order that it may not be lost sight of in the hectic bustle of momentary problems, we remind the Council of its solemn responsibility to Jewish life to translate the idea of a Planning Committee into action. It has become a ritual at conventions and conferences to diagnose the ills of Jewish life and to suggest remedies. With the conferences over, both diagnoses and proposed remedies are forgotten. This time, however, the Planning Committee idea has been published in a weekly magazine, the *American Hebrew*, and heartily approved by its editors. The first step has thus been taken to familiarize the Jewish public with the project. We hope that this will not prove to have been also the last step.

The need for a clearly formulated program for Jewish life is cogently demonstrated by the article published elsewhere in this issue, dealing with the problem of the social worker. The absence of a definite philosophy is driving Jewish social workers out of Jewish life; and the broadening scope of governmental relief is rendering specifically Jewish philanthrophy unnecessary. Clearly, the two-fold challenge demands forthright and intelligent consideration. If Federations altogether hold their peace at this time, then indeed "will relief and deliverance arise to the Jews from another place."

Disarming Labor

IT was most disquieting to learn from the general press that a bill is being circulated in congressional circles calling for compulsory arbitration in labor-capital disputes. If such a bill were presented and made into law, it would undoubtedly prove the entering wedge of fascism. Although the apparent intent of compulsory arbitration is to settle controversies by an appeal to ethical reasoning rather than by a show of force, its effect would be merely to add to the disadvantages under which labor finds itself in bargaining with its employers. This has been pointed out recently in an editorial in the *New York Post*, branding any law by which "the right to strike would be taken from labor as it has been in Italy, Austria and Germany" as "wholly alien to American tradition."

Why is the passage of this bill necessarily a step in the direction of fascism? Let us not deceive ourselves. Compulsory arbitration can compel labor to accept conditions that it does not want, but it cannot compel capital to do so. In a capitalistic order capital can always sabotage industry by withdrawing its investment. Even the state cannot compel capital to run its business without advantage to itself. The capitalistic employer can well afford to forego profits and even to lose money for a long period of time if it helps him to gain a permanent advantage over organized labor. But the employe cannot continue indefinitely without a job. The state cannot in a capitalistic economy be an impartial arbiter between labor and capital because it cannot run its own machinery except with money borrowed from capitalists, a circumstance which makes it of necessity over-solicitous of capital's claim to profit even where the state means to be fair. Compulsory arbitration does not then mean industrial peace. It means rather a unilateral disarmament of the weaker party in the economic struggle. Ultimately it means the enslavement of labor to a fascist state controlled by the big industrialists.

Nazism and the Jewish Doctrine of Election

By MORRIS ADLER

I

ONE evening some weeks ago a group of us were visiting at the home of a friend, and a discussion arose, which, naturally soon concerned itself with the situation of the Jew in the world today. The problem of the Jews in the Saarland, being fresh and uppermost in our minds, was cited. One of the group quoted the statement made by Hitler when it became known that the plebiscite overwhelmingly favored reannexation to Germany. Hitler had said, "A fifteen year wrong is being corrected, the voice of blood spoke." Thereupon another recalled having heard the phrase before. It was strangely enough at a Jewish meeting a year or more ago. Otto H. Kahn who had previously kept aloof from Jewish activity was present at this meeting and addressed it briefly. He testified to his great interest in the Jewish cause, and promised his aid; and feeling called upon to explain what must have appeared to many as a surprising change of heart, he added that as a result of the sad occurrences in Germany, he had heard, and was now responding to, "the call of blood." My friend pursued the implication no further.

Louis Golding in a sketch recently published tells of a conversation he had with a young Nazi. The Hitlerite proceeded to expound the ideology of his creed. *"Der Führer,"* he began, for only thus may the faithful speak of their leader, "has come down on earth

to destroy the Jews . . . They are the agency through which we fulfill our mission." "Mission!" muses Mr. Golding. "The word struck a little familiarly in my ears. I had heard maiden Jewish ladies in Bayswater, turbanned Jewish sheikhs of Marrakesh, philosophical Jewish stock-brokers on Riverside Drive, talking of their mission. They were getting their own back in a currency they had not anticipated."

Recently the same note was struck more directly and with far greater vehemence by William Zukerman in an article in *Harper's* of January. In it he speaks of "that nasty blood racialism which the Nazis have just discovered but which the Jews were the first to introduce, and have embodied in their life for centuries." He goes on to say with an almost masochistic glee, "There seems to be almost an historic justice in the fact that the present Nazi outburst of morbid racialism vents itself on the Jews; for the entire mad theory of a pure chosen race which has to keep its blood pure from mixing with the impure blood of the rest of inferior humanity is a direct, unaltered imitation of the chosen-people theory, which is still in force among Orthodox Jews in eastern Europe. That detestable conception of *rassenshande* which Julius Streicher, the nastiest of the Nazis, is now attempting to introduce into Germany is lifted bodily from the Jewish ghetto, where it has ruled life for centuries and is still largely in control."

This contention is not quite as novel as it sounds. For Nazism is not entirely revolutionary in the doctrine of exclusiveness which it both practices and preaches. No theory originates from the platform of a party. It generally is the articulation given to forces and tendencies already in existence. In the case of the Nazis, neither the world outlook upon which they predicate their misconduct, nor the particular formulation which they have given that outlook, is entirely new. Both may be traced back to the literature and thought of a period in German life long before the rise of Nazism. Hence it is not surprising that a similarity has been suspected to exist between Germanism and the Jewish idea of chosen people. Thus Zangwill found it necessary seventeen years ago to refute at some length the notion that "Germanism is Judaism." Today their identity is again stressed both in articles and conversation—this time by Jews.

II

What is the truth? Is the relationship between the traditional Jewish conception of Israel's position among the nations of the world, and the theory which has conquered Germany, that of parent and child? Is Nazism the German translation of the idea of the chosen people? Is the platform of Hitler and his party merely Jewish theology from which "Israel" has been expunged and "Aryan" substituted?

The truth is that the juxtaposition in which the two views are placed by those who answer in the affirmative to these questions, has just that outward plausibility, that dash of half truth which makes it so dangerous. People are so often content to stop half-way in their search for truth. Should we plumb the deepest bases of the two philosophies of life, that represented by Jewish tradition, and that expounded by Nazism, we would find, I believe, distinctions so profound as to make of them opposing rather than kindred system of thought.

The Nazi theory by which its fanatical adherents seek to justify the acts that have outraged even the callous public opinion of the world, is essentially the doctrine of *race*. The accident of birth is the foundation of all culture. Virtue can only be the biological virtue of being born into the right race. All differences of temperament, ideals, achievement and historic fortune between peoples grow out of differences in blood streams. Consistency was served nobly, when the old rector of the Berlin University was displaced by a "race

scientist" and eugenist. "The brotherhood of man" becomes a figure of speech representing as much a breach of fact as of taste. For if the sole factor in establishing worth and manhood is race, how can they be brothers under whose skins differing blood-streams course?

The protagonists of the race-theory go further. The Aryan race, they proclaim, is blessed with the finest strain. Mingling with other races can result only in biologic and hence spiritual contamination, and deterioration of the native stock. The Chancellor has declared the chief function of the State to be "the collecting and preserving of the most valuable ingredients of the primordial elements of the race, slowly but surely guiding them to a dominating position." The Nordic race is supreme and is the sun around which all others revolve. The chief theorist of this faith has described its central tenet with the opacity so beloved of Germans as being "the belief embodied in the sublime knowledge that Nordic blood represents that Mystery which replaced and vanquishes the ancient Sacraments." True Nazis think with their blood, exclusively in terms of blood.

With no morality to hamper or temper this position the banishment or isolation of other races follows directly. Since the Jew is the conspicuous example of an alien race, and since he is helpless to resist, Germany's persecution of the Jew becomes doubly inspired. It was the philosopher of the movement who demanded that "on each telegraph pole from Munich to Berlin the head of a prominent Jew be displayed." For the Jew, according to Nazi literature, is the "born ravisher of races. Criminal outcasts from the most desperate peoples once came together in the desert under the leadership of the lawgiver Moses and formed the Jewish people. Thus out of thousands of years of inbreeding there developed the mongrel race of curs which we see before us in the contemporary Jew. The Jew is forced by his blood to ruin and decompose all other races."

That both science and history when they are not the tools of frenzied prejudice point out considerable flaws in the view just presented, is too well known to require elaboration. We are primarily interested now in determining whether the outlook of Judaism is in affinity with, or whether it is in contrast to, the view of life that obtains in Germany today.

III

It would be idle and untrue to insist that a counterpart of the arbitrary exclusiveness we have found to be characteristic of Nazi theory is absent completely in the Jewish conception. In fact, it is precisely the similarity between them which makes the parallelism of the two seem plausible. However, Israel's doctrine of election developed and gradually liberated itself from a narrow chauvinism which limited salvation to members of the Jewish group. That the concept of chosen people did have such a development indicates that from the outset it bore within it the seeds of its later growth.

The fact that the idea of Israel's election was bound up with the idea of God rendered the idea of election capable of moral development. As the Jewish God-idea continued to develop and broaden, it exercised a spiritualizing effect on all departments of life. A righteous God would not arbitrarily single out one people above all others unless its righteous behavior and dealing warranted it. Nor could a God so conceived breed in his people that smugness, pandered to by every false prophet since the beginning of time, that comes from taking divine favor for granted. A God whose prime attributes are righteousness and justice could only enter into such a covenant, the duration of which would be coterminous with the group's meriting divine consideration and protection. To base the covenant conditionally upon the behavior of Israel meant, ultimately, a greater and

greater separation of Israel's election from mere biologic descent.

The concept of the chosen people had to keep pace with the constantly evolving idea of God, if Jewish thought were to be saved from becoming involved in an irreconcilable inner contradicton. It could not remain static in the face of a dynamic God-idea. As the Jewish spirit pushed farther the limits of God's rule, it carried along with it the concept of election. If God was one, all men were His children, and as the Rabbis remark, He who created Israel had likewise created all nations of the world. The faith that Israel was a chosen people could no longer bar to all others the path to salvation. In brief, the people worshiping the God of the world could not ignore the relation of God to the other peoples of the world. It is not surprising that a considerable portion of Israel's prophecy is directed to surrounding peoples, and that the prophet Isaiah looks forward to the day "when Israel shall be the third with Egypt and Assyria, a blessing in the midst of the earth." One has to know the political conditions of that day when the land of Israel was the battleground on which the struggle for supremacy between Assyria and Egypt was fought out, to appreciate the sublime universalism of that verse. And the prophet concludes, "Blessed be Egypt, My people and Assyria, the work of My hands and Israel, Mine inheritance." He would indeed be a visionary, without honor in his own land, who today, centuries after the prophet has spoken, would include the surrounding countries in the divine blessings.

IV

Another concept which contributed to the spiritualization of the doctrine of election was the concept of Torah. It likewise helped to transmute what might have been an extreme form of nationalism into a highly spiritual doctrine. After a long process of evolution, Torah came to mean much more than the sum total of Israel's history and law. It became identified with the moral principle inherent in all reality. This is what the Rabbis meant when they said that God took counsel with the Torah when He was about to create the world. The Torah of the God of mankind belongs to all mankind. The Rabbis attached great significance to the fact that revelation was vouchsafed the whole people of Israel, not in its own land, but on Mount Sinai, in the open desert. They say, "If the Torah were given in Palestine, Israel might in haughtiness say to the peoples of the world: 'You have no share in it; it is exclusively ours.' Therefore was it given openly in a public place, in the desert, so that whosoever wished to receive it might come and receive it." The Rabbis, realizing that nations naturally regard themselves as being in exclusive possession of the truth, sought to curb such collective egoism in their own people. The divine voice at Sinai, according to our Sages, was meant to be heard not by Israel alone but by all the children of men. The divine words translated themselves into seventy tongues spoken on earth, so that all might understand.

This identification of Torah with the moral law of the world brought the good life and spiritual salvation within the reach of all. In rabbinic teaching a Gentile too may merit the appellation *Tsadik*, righteous person. He need not practice the ritual law incumbent upon the Jew to merit God's grace. "The practice of charity, R. Johanan ben Zakkai declares, "atones for the sins of the peoples of the world." Emphasis on biologic descent and physical continuity weakens as the supremacy of Torah is stressed. Torah then becomes the only differentia that marks off Israel from the other nations. Judaism invites proselytes, and, once admitted, the *Ger* is accounted of practically equal status to that of the native Jew. All this is in violent contrast to the doctrine of Aryanism which teaches that no change

of mind or heart can avail against the alienating influence of blood. Human beings, according to that doctrine, are doomed to remain forever of a lower breed if they happen to be born outside the privileged race of the "blond beast."

As Zangwill has pointed out, a chosen people is essentially a choosing people, a people that has chosen to live in accordance with the law of God. It is not chosen for greater privileges, but for heavier obligations. When Amos represents God as saying "You only have I known of all the families of the earth," the conclusion drawn is "therefore will I visit upon you all your iniquities." To enjoy divine grace implies being subject to a severer accounting of one's acts. This is why, unlike Nazi literature which consistenly glorifies the people for whom it is written, the Bible constantly rebukes the people that created it. Thus was the Jewish nation disciplined into humility before the primacy of the moral law. The Jewish people could not stagnate, smugly assured that its election was a tribute to its eternal and inherent supremacy. Their election had to be continually earned. For if Israel failed in its high moral duty, it was God himself who fashioned the instrument of its punishment.

The concept of the chosen people could not possibly remain chauvinistic once Israel glimpsed the universal rule of God. It was bound to take on the form dramatically symbolized in the prophet's conception of "the servant of the Lord." As such, Israel was to be "a light of the nations, to open the blind eyes, to bring out the prisoners from the dungeon, and them that sit in darkness out of the prison-house." Was ever a creed less exclusive, or an ideal less tribal? What a sure instinct the Nazis reveal in their attack against the Bible! The Nazis know better what they are about than those who would have us believe that Germanism and Judaism are akin in their national philosophies.

V

The foregoing indicates how Israel's religion gave to its nationalism a moral sensibility and universalistic scope. The Nazi doctrine, on the other hand, perverts and barbarizes its religion so as to "coordinate" it with the main body of Nazi thought. The following manifesto drawn up by a group of twenty-one German clergymen shows how religion is conscripted in the service of the ruling party: "We condemn the dream of an earthly kingdom of peace and righteousness and general welfare for all. The party programs of various parties prove such dreams are still being dreamed. To dream of a commonwealth of peace, equality and justice and of a classless society in which hunger and misery will be abolished is to deny the necessity of God's salvation. We believe and confess that because of our sins there never will be an earthy state in which wages will be commensurate with human needs, in which peace will be attained and in which justice will be justice." Is this a translation of Israel's vision of the end of days when peace will rule, and righteousness will well up like the waters?

Nazism, resting solely on racial descent, devoid of all spiritual vision and informed by no moral law, has little affinity with the Jewish doctrine of election. The one sets up an immutable barrier of blood and race between one group and the rest of the world; the other opens the door of God's kingdom to the whole of humanity. Nazism, on the other hand, shuts the door for all time to all outside the magic circle it has drawn about the Nordic race. The Jew, though he claimed to possess the secret of salvation, did not claim a monopoly on it.

Though the Jew has not always lived up to the true meaning of the *am segulah* idea, he has never abrogated or withdrawn it. Of the two forces that blended in the doctrine of election, nationalism and universalism, persecution

has often intensified the first and obscured the second. It is true that in the ghetto, humiliated and outraged, the Jew regarded his people as superior and tended to exclude its tormentors from eternal bliss. The light he was to be to the nations was extinguished in the general darkness. Under the stress of suffering and oppression, in periods when the world treated him with brutality, the Jew gave to the actual exclusion which the majority enforced upon him a compensatory, positive interpretation. He would have been less than human if, shut out by the world, he had not taken complete mental refuge within the Jewish group. Only thus could he maintain his self-respect.

No wonder that in subsequent writings a more parochial sentiment often jostles against a universalistic one. No apologies are necessary for the instances of chauvinism in the wide range of Jewish thought and tradition. Suppose Ezra enacted a race purge, suppose Judah Halevi did claim for his people an inherent superiority. These do not constitute the main spring of our faith today. They are exclusively the reflex of the historic conditions, or of the prevailing philosophy of the period to which they belong, and are as little binding upon us as the primitive conception of God, or the laws of sacrifice.

If it is from the narrowest and least laudable formulation of the Jewish conception that the philosophy of the Nazi derives, then it has swept away centuries of development in sensibility and human sympathy. It has gone back millenia for the source of its present faith. The crime of the Nazis is spiritual and intellectual atavism. Nazism has taken its stand by the side of long outlived principles. Nazism is as distant from the highest reaches of the Jewish conception as the intelligent modern Jew's outlook is from the primitive outlook of his earliest ancestors. If in some respects its racial theory resembles the outlook of our ancestors, it is not a reflection upon our ancestors but on the Nazis. To argue the identity of Nazism and Judaism is to misunderstand and misconstrue the most basic asumptions of Judaism.

Jewish Social Work: A Dissolving View

by B. S.

THE Jewish social work field is relatively young in this country. Organized agencies and integrated procedures did not play any really important role until the vast immigration of the early twentieth century called upon every resource of the Jews, already in America, to care for the destitute refugees of their own people. Where the family and *mishpohah* could not meet the needs of the immigrants, organized Jewry filled in the breach with make-shift and emergency assistance which gradually developed efficiency. The assistance and adjustment of the Jewish newcomer to this country progressed with such rapidity that the Jewish worker was hailed as a pioneer. Indeed, the Jewish social work field guided the general field for many years to finer techniques of interviewing, family visiting, and other forms of service. The Jewish foster-home placing agencies, orphan asylums, and family case work agencies, along with several other types, antedated, or developed simultaneously with, the best of the non-sectarian and Christian agencies.

Within the last few years a rapid change has come about. Where the Jewish social workers were leaders and models for the others to follow, they are now so torn by internal strife and difficulties that they are followers, rather than leaders. There has been

no outstanding contribution from the Jewish workers for many years. This is due to many causes. One of the most outstanding has been the development of the case work technique, strange as this may seem. The last decade has witnessed an ever growing emphasis upon the perfection of technique. This in itself was an end greatly to be desired, and the Jewish worker was enthusiastically swept along with the general development. Workers began to study. In fact, at that time, with the ever-growing need for trained workers for Jewish agencies, a training school was established to provide workers well skilled, and prepared to use the best tools of the new case work method. Gradually this emphasis on technique led to the neglect of other specifically Jewish aspects of the work. Case work techniques are non-sectarian, so to speak; they apply with equal validity to both Jew and Gentile. With the concentration upon technique, an equally important phase of the work of any agency was and is being reflected. I refer to *the need for Jewish content*, for goals, and for a philosophy of the Jews as a group and a people with special needs. Today, except for minor details, such as a slight difference in budget for kosher food, the method of handling a Jewish client does not differ from that of handling a Gentile. This phenomenon, apparent to workers and outsiders, has led to serious questioning of the need for separate Jewish social agencies.

A more important and more recent development, infinite in its implications for the Jewish social work field, has been the establishment of public outdoor relief for the first time in this country upon such a large scale. The growing case loads were overworking private agencies, rendering them incapable of meeting the crisis; and there was no sign that the increasing army of unemployed could be adequately taken care of. The government found itself facing an unprecedented situation in its history. Various attempts at meeting the needs of the people met with disastrous failure, or made no impression whatsoever. With the growing discontent, manifested most clearly by the first political upset in a presidential election since the time of Cleveland, the Emergency Home Relief Bureau, and its various related Bureaus, came into being. Established on a precarious emergency basis early in 1932, it has been expanding, adding to its case load; now public relief is no longer only an emergency measure. Workers who were first taken in on a relief basis are being chosen for training and background. The personnel is being increased rapidly, and the efficiency of the Bureau, in its limited scope, is growing rapidly.

For the first time since their creation, the load of Jewish family agencies is being appreciably decreased every day. J.S.S.A. and U.J.A., two Jewish case work agencies in New York City and Brooklyn, have been and are still in the process of transferring the major part of their case loads to the Home Relief Bureaus in their respective districts. These are the "chronic dependents" who have been carried for many years, and for whom there seems no possibility of ever establishing independence. Other cases of increasing number are so-called "cooperative cases", where relief is given by Home Relief Bureau and case work is done by the private family agency. This obviously has reduced the size of the case loads of Jewish districts to a very appreciable degree. More than ever has the question come to the fore: *"Why Jewish agencies?"* The cases can now be handled adequately by Jewish workers in the public agencies and non-sectarian private agencies. In addition, in spite of the pitifully inadequate standards of the Home Relief Bureau, I found during my work as a Home Relief investigator last summer that many of the families welcomed the change to the public agencies. With

the large percentage of the neighborhood on relief, there seemed to be no longer any loss of status in acceptance of "charity," as there had been before when so few were being assisted. The investigator in poor neighborhoods goes from door to door, almost as a community fixture, with very few of the families feeling any loss of pride. Accepting money from the city does not seem to be the same as receiving it from private funds. Coming from the government, relief is accepted by them as their due.

In addition to the Home Relief program, the other activities of the Department of Public Welfare are steadfastly increasing, with a growing awareness on the part of the government of the people's increased needs. This is threatening to substitute for and almost eliminate the Jewish agencies, whose work will be duplicated. Needless to say, there will always be the need for the private agency as the research guide, offering more specialized training to care for special needs. However, this is a function which lacks the emotional appeal and publicity of the relief-giving function. In a country where legislation is so slow in the making, the most pressing and publicized needs are the ones which occupy almost exclusively the attention of legislators. The function of the private agency will not be sufficiently clear for them to realize how vital such agencies are.

The tremendous burden of taxation now being imposed, and which will be increased in the future to pay for the public program of relief, public works and other attempts at recovery, will also be a deterrent to the philanthropic support which has been the mainstay of the Jewish philanthropic field. In addition as has already been evidenced by the growing difficulty in raising Federation budgets, the contributors have been hard-hit themselves by the depression, and sad to say, their philanthropic activities have been the hardest hit in turn. This has already led to a general lowering of standards of salary and other expenditures, with resultant conflicts between staffs and executives.

This growing conflict within the agencies themselves has developed simultaneously with the increasing radicalism in the general field of Jewish social work. Within the last few years, since the depression has brought the general economic situation to the forefront of public life, the expansion of radical activities within the general social work field has been phenomenal. Social work as a whole has gone through certain very definite stages, the sociological one with emphasis upon the family, the psychological and psychiatric with emphasis upon the individual, and lastly, it would seem, an "economic" stage with concentration upon the economic system as a whole. This is a stage which has not yet been clearly defined in the general field as such, but which is becoming increasingly obvious among the workers in the Jewish field. With the present distressing situation of widespread unemployment and signs of the general decay of the present capitalistic system in America, the social workers in the Jewish field are turning more and more to the solution presented by the Communists. With the insecurity of their own positions and the threat to Jewish social workers as a body, they are beginning to identify their situation with that of the laboring class, considering both in opposition to the capitalists.

Radicalism has pervaded every department of the agencies, so that new workers in the field are immediately plunged into the movement. Every inducement is offered; lectures, meetings, and "workers' organizations" to identify their interests with the interests of those already active in the radical movement. The growth of "rank and file" organizations and publications has been tremendous as well. Conferences indicate with ever-increasing clarity the sharp split which is taking place between the interests of the workers and the execu-

tives. Dissension is still growing, aided by the pressure within and without the field. With this powerful conflict, the Jewishness of Jewish social work has suffered. Communism as such is not compatible with the existence of a specific Jewish individuality, save as a protected minority in the present, with eventual extinction in the future brotherhood of the proletariat of the world.

To all these currents tending to destroy the field of Jewish work as such, there has been a reaction; but it is decidedly inadequate to meet the emergency. This is due to several factors.

The federated agencies have been constructed on a highly undemocratic basis, with no mass participation in the budget planning, fund raising, or administration. It has been rather the efforts of one class on behalf of another, underprivileged, group. With the ever-growing gap in the field between the mainstay of the agencies, the capitalistic group, and the workers and clients, it has become increasingly difficult to effect any adjustment or reconciliation. In addition, workers are leaving the Jewish field now that they may be absorbed in the public relief system, where their superior training offers the possibility of advancement.

Many socially-minded executives have looked upon this situation with a good deal of distress and bewilderment, not knowing how to meet it at all. Within the best social case work agencies in the Jewish group, the situation is so tense that it does not seem possible an understanding will ever be reached. Working relations are being strained, and, within the office itself, there is almost obvious tension and suspicion. This even interferes with the work to some extent. No great efforts can be made in an uncomfortable and strained atmosphere.

One wonders whether even the rising forces of anti-Semitic propaganda in this country will be effective to arouse unity as a measure of defense. The Jewish group in America is so heterogeneous that Jews have conflicting interests, and it does not seem very likely that a situation of great stress will effect that necessary unity.

BOOK REVIEWS

As We See Einstein

"THE WORLD AS I SEE IT," by Albert Einstein; Covici, Friede, New York, 1934.

THIS book interests us less by reason of what it tells us about the world as Einstein sees it than by what it reveals to us of Einstein as he views the world. It is a collection of informal essays, addresses, letters and the like, revealing Einstein's outlook on the world of nature and of men. It shows him to us as scientist, humanist and Jew. He is a Jew not by the mere accident of his birth but by his identifying himself with the suffering, striving and aspiration of his people. His espousal of Jewish nationalism in its deeper spiritual aspects is whole-hearted and spontaneous, without stultifying reservations and apologies. He has faith in the creative possibilities of Jewish life. Unlike those Jewish intellectuals who seek in their preoccupation with their careers an avenue of escape from Judaism, Einstein remains a man of whom the Jewish people can be proud without fear that their pride will be shamed by his repudiation of them.

For a man whose major preoccupation is with physical science, the range of Einstein's social interests is remarkable. His prescriptions for social ills are sometimes too naive and reflect an insufficient appreciation of the difficulty of implementing valid ideals. But his forthright honesty penetrates through most of the disingenuous rationalizations that are used to mask the horrors of war or the injustices of the economic order. In an age in which liberalism is

the most unpopular of causes, he dares be a liberal and a consistent advocate of peace, democracy and tolerance.

What strikes us about those essays that deal with Einstein's attitude to science is his profoundly religious approach. He is aware that his interest in science is based on a cosmic religious sense. "What a deep conviction of the rationality of the universe and what a yearning to understand, were it but a feeble reflection of the mind revealed in this world, Kepler and Newton must have had to enable them to spend years of solitary labor in disentangling the principles of the celestial sphere? . . . It is cosmic religious feeling that gives a man strength of this sort."

It is somewhat surprising that a man like Einstein, who combines this sense of cosmic religion with a passionate humanism, should not fully grasp the relation of religion to ethics. We can understand and follow him in his repudiation of anthropomorphic conceptions of deity and we can agree with him that "A man's ethical behavior should be based on sympathy, education and social ties." We may even concede that a man may be ethical without being religious, and that the content of our ethical judgments must be based on social experience rather than on our conception of God. But the same sort of support that religion gives to science it gives to ethics. If man can be moved to a cosmic awe amounting to worship by the perception of the laws of nature and how they correspond to man's intuition of unity and relationship between all aspects of reality, can he not be equally moved to wonder at the phenomenon of human personality and at the way in which life expresses itself and recreates itself through ideals? Must we not marvel at the mystery by which creativity manifests itself in uniform laws that somehow produce an infinity of unique and individualized objects? This universal characteristic of nature is reflected in humanity in the sense of the oneness of Man and the uniqueness of individual men, a perception that lies at the basis of ethical thinking and acting. Not only cosmic religion but even folk religion can be made to serve ethics through the stimulation it gives to ethical feeling by its worship of the Life of the Universe as the sponsor of human personality. This is the abiding significance of the ideal of a personal God when stripped of its anthropomorphism and reinterpreted to harmonize with a scientific view of the world. If Einstein did not identify the God-idea with the specific conception of God held by past generations, we believe that he would recognize such a relation between religion and ethics as we have pointed out.

EUGENE KOHN.

Solution by Wish Fulfillment

"JUDAISM", Morris Lichtenstein; Jewish Science Publishing Co., New York, 1934.

RABBI LICHTENSTEIN is the leader and founder of the Jewish Science movement, and he has written a sincere but entirely inadequate little volume. In fifteen brief chapters he describes what Judaism is, what constitutes the problem of Jewish life, its causes and its solution, and the methods we must utilize to effect that solution.

Judaism is here regarded as the religion of Israel, but the reader is hard put to it to determine the exact nature of this religion. Lichtenstein at one point apparently believes in the old fashioned God who answers prayers of petition: "Of what value are prayers if we do not believe that One hearkens to them? To what purpose are our houses of worship if we do not believe that the supplications offered within their walls receive a response?" (p. 158) "Indeed, if prayer is simply a psychological process, as some of our religious leaders claim, then prayer has no place in religion". (p. 110) Shall we infer that the opposite of "psychological" or "subjective" efficacy is objective efficacy

of prayer? How then does Lichtenstein explain his acceptance of science (Ch. 3) which denies validity "particularly to the idea of supernatural intervention with the workings of nature"?

This is typical of the wish-fulfillment in which Lichtenstein indulges; he would like to believe that Judaism and science have never conflicted. He would like to believe that Judaism anticipated every ethical advance made by mankind; he would like to believe that by advocating tranquility, meekness, truthfulness and optimism we can realize those virtues in all men. The author simply does not come to grips with realities; he says of virtue "I'm for it", and hopes that by some magic the gap between pious hope and achievement will be bridged. Thus he day-dreams: "What a splendid type of manhood the Jew would present if, in addition to the other aspects of Judaism, he incorporated also these (four) virtues in his daily life".

The Synagogue, it seems, is to be revitalized by means of the same sleight-of-hand. "It is clear to us that the real reason why the great majority of our people here in this land are indifferent to divine services is simply that . . . they do not believe that God hearkens to their prayers . . ." What to do? "The Synagogue must again emphasize . . . the efficacy of prayer."

I am afraid that Rabbi Lichtenstein's message will not be taken too seriously by American Jewry.

IRA EISENSTEIN.

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